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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SSM-05 DHA-02
ORM-02 IO-13 /074 W
----------181617Z 111206 /50
O 181450Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5324
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PLO, IS, US
SUBJECT: GOI REACTIONTO PRESIDENT CARTER'S REMARKS RE "PALESTINIAN HOMELAND"

1. IN THE WAKE OF THE RECENT CONTOVERSY STIRRED UP BY PRESIDENT CARTER'S USE OF THE TERM "DEFENSIBLE BORDERS" AND SUBSEQUENT CLARIFICATION THEREON, THE ISRAELIS HAVE AGAIN BEEN SURPRISED BY HIS REFERENCE TO A "HOMELAND FOR THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES" AND TAKEN ABACK BY REPORTS OF HIS UNEXPECTED HANDSHAKE WITH A PLO REPRESENTATIVE--A STORY WHICH BROKE SHORTLY BEFORE THIS WRITING (SEPTEL).

2. REACTING TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S "HOMELAND" REMARK, PRIME MINISTER RABIN DREW APPLAUSE FROM ISRELI HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS MARCH 17 BY SAYING THAT HE AGREED WITH THE PRESIDENT'S REMARK IF THE HOMELAND IS IN JORDAN. RABIN THEN REITERATED ISRAEL'S POSITION THAT THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE MUST BE SOLVED "WITHIN THE FRAME-
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WORK OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND JORDAN AND EAST OF ISRAEL IN THE JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN STATE, AND THAT SPECIAL EXPRESSION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE PALESTINIAN IDENTITY." HE ADDED WITH APPARENT CHAGRIN "I THINK THAT CARTER DOES NOT MEAN THIS, BUT WERE I ABLE TO INTERPRET THIS VERSION IN MY WAY, I WOULD BE WILLING TO LIVE WITH IT."

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3. FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON SEVERAL HOURS LATER,AND
WITH THE BENEFIT OF A TEXT OF WHAT THE PRESIDENT
ACTUALLY SAID, MADE A NEUTRAL INTERPRETATIONOF THE
REMARK'S SIGNIFICANCE. "IF I READ THE PRECISE TEXT
CORRECTLY," HE SAID, "PRESIDENT CARTER IS STIPULATING
THEREIN THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED
AMONG STATES, AND AS FAR AS I KNOW, THE PLO IS NOT A
STATE. THEREFORE, I PREFER TO READ THE STATEMENTS
IN A STRAIGHTFORWARD MANNER, WITHOUT ACCORDING THEM
A NEGATIVE INTERPREATION." ALLON LATER ENLARGED
UPON HIS VIEW FOR ISRAEL TV, SAYING "I AM IN NO
HURRY TO ASSERT THAT AN EROSION HAS TAKEN PLACE IN THE
U.S. POSITION REGARDING THIS ISSUE...I'VE NEVER YET
TRIED TO EMBELLISH AN UNDESIRABLE ANNOUNCEMENT, REGARD-
LESS OF WHETHER IT WAS MADE BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT OR
BY ANOTHER FRIENDLY GOVERNMENT...IF, IN THE NEXT FEW
DAYS, I AM PERSUADED THAT A CHANGE HAS OCCURRED IN THE
POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES, I'LL BRING IT TO THE
ATTENTION OF THE PUBLIC IN ISRAEL AND WILL ALSO MAKE
KNOWN ISRAEL'S CRITICAL VIEW TO THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION."

4. CAPSULE COMMENTS FROM OTHER LEADING ISRAELI PERSON-
ALITIES, AS REPORTED IN THE JERUSALEM POST, INCLUDE THAT
OF LIKUD LEADER MENACHEM BEGIN, WHO SNIPED AT THE
LABOR GOVERNMENT: "WE HEAR FROM JERUSALEM THAT THE
PALESTINIAN PROBLEM SHOULD BE SOLVED, AND THERE CAN
BE NO PEACE UNLESS IT IS SOLVED.SO YOU'VE GOT THE
RESULTS" (IN THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT'S REMARKS). LIKUD
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MK BE'ERI SUGGESTED THAT THE PALESTINIANS ESTABLISH
THEIR HOMELAND IN THE "GREAT ARAB HOMELAND" FROM THE
JORDAN TO THE PERSIAN GULF.

5. HAARETZ DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT MARCH 18 REPORTED
GREAT CONCERN AND DEEP DISPLEASURE AMONG "SENIOR
GOVERNMENT CIRCLES" OVER CARTER'S "HOMELAND"REMARK.
"THE CIRCLES SAID THAT DESPITE ALL THE WILL TO MINIMIZE
THE IMPORTANCE OF THAT STATEMENT, ON CANNOT BUT REGARD
IT AS A GRAVE STEP TOWARD POSSIBLE U.S. SUPPORT FOR THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A PALESTINIAN STATE ON THE WEST BANK."
GOLAN ADDED THAT THRE IS GREAT ASTONISHMENT THAT THE
PRESIDENT HAD NOT EXPRESSED HIS VIEWS ON THIS MATTER
TO THE PRIME MINISTER DURING THEIR RECENT TALKS, AND
WROTE THAT TOP ECHELONS IN JERUSALEM BELIEVE THAT
BRZEZINSKI MAY BE BEHIND CARTER'S "UNPOSITIVE"

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POSITIONS ON PALESTINIAN AND FINAL BORDER ISSUES.

6. IN A BIT OF INSTANT ANALYSIS, HAARETZ'S MARGALIT WROTE THAT THERE IS A GAP IN JERUSALEM BETWEEN THE DESIRE TO PREVENT THE LOSS OF STABLE ISRAEL FOREIGN POLICYPOSITIONS AND THE DESIRE TO GIVE THE ELECTORATE A ROSY PICTURE OF JERUSALEM-WASHINGTON RELATIONS. ISRAELI ATTEMPTS TO EXPLAIN WHAT PRESIDENT CARTER REALLY MEANT DO NOT CORRESPOND WITH THE FACTS, HE WROTE, WHICH ARE ONLY EXPLAINED BY THE BROOKINGS PLAN, THE FINAL SECTION OF WHICH HAS NOW BEEN ADOPTED IN THE FORM OF THE SUGGESTED HOMELAND FOR PALESTINIAN REFUGEES--EVEN BEFORE ARAB LEADERS ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON. THE BROOKINGS PLAN, WITH ITS ELEMENTS OF THE ROGERS PLAN AND OF SENATOR FULBRIGHT'S VIEWS,IS BEING ADOPTED BY THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION, WITHOUT THE UNNECESSARY PAIN OF GOI PROTEST BECAUSE THE ISRAELIS ARE IN A SENSITIVE ELECTORAL PERIOD, ACCORDIN TO MARGALIT.

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7. THE AFTERNOON PAPERS MARCH 18 REPORTED THE PRESIDENT

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FOLLOWED UP HIS REMARK WITH CLARIFICATIONS. YEDIOT (KIWITY) QUOTED A CBS REPORT THAT THE PALESTINIAN HOMELAND WOULD HAVE TO BE "IN JORDAN" BUT, SAYS YEDIOT, THE CBS NEWSMAN DID NOT ASK CARTER WHAT HE MEANT BY JORDAN, WHETHER EAST OF THE JORDAN RIVER, OR WEST OF IT. KIWITY ALSO REPORTED BRZEZINSKI AS POINTING OUT THAT UNACCUSTOMED AS THE PUBLIC MIGHT BE TO THE PRESIDENT'S FRANK STYLE, IT WAS VERY MUCH BASED ON THINKING BEFOREHAND. YEDIOT'S DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT (TZIMUKI) WROTE THAT CARTER'S CLARIFICATIONS BROUGHT "CONSIDERABLE RELIEF" IN JERUSALEM, STRENGTHENING THE VIEW THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD NOT CHANGED ITS POSITION ON THE PLO AND THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE. MAARIV (DISSENCHIK) CITED THE "HOMELAND"CLARIFICATION AS "IN THE FRAMEWORK OF JORDAN OR IN SOME OTHER WAY."

8. EDITORIAL COMMENT IS HEAVY. HAARETZ NOTED THAT THE "HOMELAND" TERM IS OBVIOUSLY IMPORTANT, SINCE MR. CARTER COULD HAVE SAID THAT THE "LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE" MUST BE SATISFIED. PROCEEDING WITH SEVERAL PARAGRAPHS OF STANDARD ISRAELI VIEWS RE PALESTINIAN-RELATED ISSUES, HAARETZ WINDS UP BY SAYING THAT THE ONLY WAY FOR CARTER TO ELIMINATE THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY HIS HOMELAND STATEMENTIS FOR HIM TO STATE THAT HE IS NOT PREPARING THE GROUND FOR A THIRD STATE IN THE WESTERNPART OF ERETZ ISRAEL, ONE WHICH WOULD PROVIDE THE PLO WITH A BASE FOR SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES AGAINST JORDAN AND WARFARE AGAINST ISRAEL. DAVAR EDITORIALIZED THAT U.S.-ISRAELI DIFFERENCES OVER PALESTINIAN QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN APPARENT SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF THE SAUNDERS DOCUMENT, BUT WHILE THESE DIFFERENCES REMAIN,THEY ARE NO OBSTACLE IN THE SEARCH FOR A SOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IN THE JORDANIAN FRAMEWORK. HOWEVER, DAVAR WROTE,THESE CONCEPTUAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE U.S.
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MAY ASSUME OPERATIVE SIGNIFICANCE IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE.THE JERUSALEM POST FOUND PARTICULARLY DISTRESSING, EVEN SHOCKING, THE TIMING OF MR. CARTER'S "HOMELAND" REMARK WHEN THE WEEK LONG DELIBERATIONS OF THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT THE PLO IS COMMITTED TO ISRAEL'S DESTRUCTION. CARTER'S GESTURE WILL BE INTERPRETED AS A REWARD FOR CALLOUS INTRANSIGENCENCE, SAYS THE POST.

9. ONE COMMENTARYWHICH VIEWS THE "CARTER PLAN" IN A SOMEWHAT FAVORABLE LIGHT IS BY MAARIV'S BENN. ALTHOUGH HE DOES NOT ADDRESS SPECIFICALLY THE PRESIDENT'S REMARK ON THE PALESTINIAN HOMELAND,BENN

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APPROVES OF "DEFENSIBLE BORDERS" WHICH, HE WRITES, MAY HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED TO THE PRESIDENT BY SIMCHA DINITZ. SUCH BORDERS WOULD ENSURE ISRAEL THE RIGHTOF SELF-DEFENSE, "THE GREATEST GUARANTEE OF ALL."
ALTHOUGH THE CARTER PLAN MAY SUFFER THE SAME FATE AS THE ROGERS PLAN, BENN SAYS, FROM THE ISRAELI POINT OF VIEW IT IS A WISE AND CONSTRUCTIVE DEVELOPMENT, IF NOT A (TOTALLY) SATISFACTORY ONE.
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Message Attributes

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